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[54] PROGRAMMABLE AUTOMATIC CALLING SYSTEMS

[75] Inventors: Richard I. Samuel, Westfield, N.J.; Fred J. Smith, Plantation, Fla.

[73] Assignee: Jayem Dialer Corp., Westfield, N.J.

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Primary Examiner—Thomas W. Brown Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik

57] ABSTRACT

A processor-controlled automatic calling system is connected to a plurality of telephone lines within a subscriber's telephone system and all telephone sets within the subscriber's telephone system are monitored for the occurrence of an off hook condition. Upon the occurrence of an off hook condition, a user is permitted a predetermined interval for initiating operation of the automatic calling system through entry of a service code to cause an accessed telephone number and billing code to be outpulsed. The accessed telephone number outpulsed, the response tone of a contacted computer monitored, and the billing code outpulsed by the automatic calling system upon receipt of such response tone, are readily programmable at the user's site by placement of the automatic calling system in a program mode. In certain embodiments of the invention, an accessing telephone set is muted while the automatic calling system is performing outpulsing functions. Outpulsing functions are preferably performed under the control of a hardware timer to allow additional functions to be performed by a processor on a time-shared basis, and multiple telephone numbers and billing codes may be automatically accessed.

32 Claims, 16 Drawing Figures

